

# **CONVICTED OUT OF HER OWN MOUTH**

**THE RECORD OF GERMAN CRIMES**

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1917a  
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BY  
**H. W. WILSON**

Reprinted from  
**THE NATIONAL REVIEW**

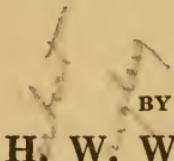
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## CONVICTED OUT OF HER OWN MOUTH

IN this article the writer proposes to place on record the chief offences committed by Germany against the laws of war. If only as an answer to the stealthy pro-German propaganda and as a justification for the demand which is being made for reprisals, it is important that the facts should be stated in a compact and accessible form, and be widely known.

As one of the lines of defence adopted by Germans and their secret or open friends is to deny that the crimes were ever perpetrated, I shall, whenever possible, cite the evidence of German documents and German statements, or of dispassionate neutrals. The documents for the most part are soldiers' diaries, found on the enemy prisoners or dead, and as they were never intended to see the light are free from any sort of prejudice.

### I.—CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT

*Germany made the War.*—The German White Book (Official): “We were perfectly aware that a possible warlike attitude of Austria-Hungary against Serbia might bring Russia upon the field, and that it might involve us in a war in accordance with our duty

as allies. We could not, however, . . . advise our ally to take up a yielding attitude . . . nor deny him our assistance in these trying days."—Cd. 7860, p. 406. (This statement is particularly important as contradicting the assurance given by Prince Lichnowsky, German Ambassador in London, to Sir E. Grey, that "the German Government were endeavouring to hold back and moderate the Cabinet of Vienna," on July 21, 1914. Both are given in the British Official *Collected Documents relating to the Outbreak of the European War.*—Cd. 7860, pp. 151, 406.)

Maximilian Harden: "Why not admit what is and must be the truth, that everything was jointly prepared by Vienna and Berlin. We should be . . . unworthy of the men who achieved Prussian predominance in Germany . . . if fifty years after Königgrätz things could be otherwise."—*Zukunft*, August 1, 1914.

"Let us drop our miserable attempts to excuse Germany's action. Not against our will and as a nation taken by surprise did we fling ourselves into this gigantic venture. We willed it; we had to will it."—*Zukunft*, November 1914 (quoted in the Paris *Temps*, November 20, 1914).

Baron Wangenheim, German Ambassador in Constantinople, on July 15, 1914, eight days before the communication of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, informed Senator Garroni, the Italian Ambassador in Constantinople, that the Note would be so worded as to render war inevitable. This important fact was disclosed by Signor Barzilai in his speech at Naples on September 26, 1915.

*Germany violated the Neutrality of Belgium.*—Herr

von Bethmann Hollweg in the Reichstag: "Necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and have perhaps already entered Belgium. That is contrary to the dictates of international law. The wrong—I speak openly—the wrong we are thereby committing we will try to make good as soon as our military aims have been attained."—August 4, 1914.

*Germany and Austria mobilised first.*—The Austrian general mobilisation was ordered at one in the morning of July 31, 1914. This is not denied by the Germans.—Cd. 7860, p. 222. The Russian general mobilisation was ordered, according to the German official White Book, "during the afternoon of July 31."—Cd. 7860, p. 412.

*Germany attacked France.*—M. Viviani, the French Prime Minister, reported on August 2, 1914. "North of Delle two German patrols . . . crossed the frontier this morning and advanced . . . more than six miles from the frontier. The officer who commanded the first has blown out the brains of a French soldier."—Cd. 7860, p. 236. Herr Bethmann Hollweg, the German Chancellor, admitted in the Reichstag on August 4, "against express orders a patrol of the XIV. Army Corps, apparently led by an officer, crossed the frontier on August 2," and proceeded to allege that "long before this . . . French airmen had penetrated Southern Germany and had thrown bombs on our railway lines. French troops had attacked our frontier guards at the Schlucht Pass."—Cd. 7860, p. 438. Herr von Schoen, the German Ambassador in Paris, referred to these aeroplane raids and said they occurred at Wesel, the Eiffel country, Karlsruhe and

Nuremberg. A search has been made through the Wesel, Karlsruhe and Nuremberg newspapers and it shows that no such incident is recorded in them. And the Chief Magistrate of Nuremberg on April 3, 1916, informed an inquirer: "The Acting General Commandant of the 3rd Bavarian Army Corps in this city has no information that bombs were ever thrown by enemy aeroplanes upon the railway lines Nuremberg-Kissingen or Nuremberg-Anspach, either before or after the outbreak of war. All such assertions and newspaper reports have been found to be false." The combat at the Schlucht is equally fabulous. The German declaration of war against France was not issued until August 3, at 6.45 P.M.

*Germany publicly lied concerning Great Britain.*—Herr von Bethmann Hollweg: "The inner responsibility for the war rests with the Government of Great Britain."—Speech in the Reichstag, December 2, 1914. The same speaker said on August 4, 1914: "Great Britain, warmly supported by us, tried to mediate."—Cd. 7860, p. 436. The German White Book, dated August 1914, stated: "These endeavours of ours for mediation were being continued with increasing energy, supported by English diplomacy."—Cd. 7860, p. 411.

*Falsification of Documents.*—The *Nord-deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, on October 13 and November 24, 1915, published documents seized by the Germans in the Belgian archives, relating to armed assistance by Great Britain if Belgium were attacked, and at the same time the German Government published a Dutch edition of these documents, accompanied by a photograph of the text. The photograph contained a pas-

sage on the margin: "The entry of the English into Belgium would only take place on the violation of our neutrality by Germany," which was omitted in the Dutch translation and in the German newspaper. A second passage was deliberately altered. It ran in the photograph: "Our conversation was quite confidential." The German Government altered this into: "Our convention was quite confidential," making it appear that there was a secret treaty between Great Britain and Belgium.

The parallel of the Ems dispatch, which was deliberately falsified by Bismarck to create war, will at once suggest itself. "Blessed is the hand," wrote the German historian, Hans Delbrück, "that falsified the Ems dispatch."

## II.—CRIMES COMMITTED ON LAND BY THE GERMAN ARMY

### (1) *Against Combatants*

*Systematic Murder of Wounded and Prisoners.*—Diary of R. Brenneisen, of the 112th German Regiment, prisoner in Great Britain: "The brigade order is to shoot all Frenchmen who fall into our hands, wounded or not. No prisoners are to be made." This refers to an order issued by Major-General Stenger, commanding the 58th Brigade, given verbally.—Bland, *Germany's Violations of the Laws of War*, an official French work, p. 53; cf. J. H. Morgan, *German Atrocities*, pp. 51-52.

Diary of A. Rothacher, 142nd Regiment, August

27, 1914: "French prisoners and wounded are all shot because they mutilate and ill-treat our wounded." —Bland, 54 in photographic facsimile.

*Jauersches Tageblatt*, October 18, 1914: An account by Unter-Offizier Klemt, 154th Regiment, of fighting on September 24: "We reached a little depression; French soldiers lay there, dead or wounded, in a mass. We killed or bayoneted the wounded. . . . I heard some extraordinary cracks. A soldier of the 154th was bringing the butt of a rifle down vigorously on the bald head of a Frenchman. He was very wisely using a French rifle for this purpose, so as not to risk breaking his own. Very tender-hearted men were so merciful as to finish off the French wounded with a bullet, but the others cut and thrust at them as much as they could. Our foes had fought valiantly; they were picked troops. The gallant fusiliers spare their country the cost of caring for many enemies, whether these be wounded slightly or severely." This passage is reproduced in photographic facsimile by Bédier, *Les Crimes Allemands*, pp. 32-36. It is "certified true by De Niem, Lieutenant," and no protest is made against it in the German newspaper.

Diary of Private Hassemer (VIII. Army Corps): "3/9/1914. At Sommepy (Marne)—A horrible massacre, the village burnt to the ground, the Frenchmen thrown into the burning houses, civilians and all burnt together."—Bédier, p. 10.

(*Liquid-Fire Projectors*.—Instructions were issued by the Headquarters of the 2nd German Army, on October 16, 1914, which fell into the hands of the French, and contained the following passage: "Flame projec-

tors. . . . They eject a liquid which at once ignites spontaneously. The waves of flame have an effective range of 25 square yards. . . . They are to be used chiefly in street fighting."—Reproduced photographically, Bland, 281.

No protest was made by neutrals.

*Asphyxiating Gas.*—The use of this is expressly forbidden by The Hague Convention of 1899, which Germany signed. Sir John French reported on May 3, 1915, regarding the first use of poison gas on the British front at Ypres: "A week before the Germans first used this method they announced in their official communiqué that we were making use of asphyxiating gases. At the time there appeared to be no reason for this astounding falsehood, but now, of course, it is obvious that it was part of the scheme. It . . . shows they recognised its illegality and were anxious to forestall neutral and possibly domestic criticism." According to prisoners the gas was contained in steel cylinders, fitted with tubes pointed to the British trenches. Asphyxiating shells were also employed by the enemy.

*Crimes against the Red Cross and White Flag. Firing on the Red Cross.*—The evidence was collected by Lord Bryce's Committee (Appendix to Report, Cd. 7895, p. 135 ff.), where it is stated that the enemy shelled buildings on which the Red Cross flag was conspicuously flying, even when so close to them that there could be no difficulty in making out the flag; that he fired on stretcher-bearers and ambulances; and that in one case a Red Cross dépôt was shelled on most days in the week.

*Abuse of the Red Cross.*—Evidence that the Germans mounted machine-guns in Red Cross ambulances and that ammunition was carried in a Red Cross motor-car under command of officers is contained in the Report of Lord Bryce's Committee.—Appendix, Cd. 7895, pp. 138-140.

*Misuse of the White Flag.*—“There is sufficient evidence that these offences have been frequent, deliberate, and in many cases committed by whole units under orders.”—Lord Bryce's Report, p. 60.

*Murder of Medical Officers and Stretcher-bearers.*—While a number of wounded were being attended to in a hospital at Goméry, a patrol of the 47th German Infantry appeared, and began a general massacre of the wounded and medical staff. Assistant-Surgeon Vaissière was mortally wounded; the hospital, full of wounded, was deliberately set on fire; Stretcher-bearer Gresse was shot; and in all about 400 wounded Belgian soldiers were killed or burnt to death. Statements regarding this affair have been made by the Chief Surgeon Simonin and six stretcher-bearers. (Several of these are printed in Bland, pp. 229-244.)

*Use of Poison.*—This is forbidden by The Hague Convention. A message sent by Captain Krüger of the German South-West African force to “Outpost, Pforte,” was captured by General Botha on March 10, 1915, and ran: “The patrol Gabib has been instructed thoroughly to infect with disease the Ida Mine. Approach Swakop and Ida Mine with extreme caution and do not water there.”—In facsimile, Cd. 8306, p. 76. In other cases arsenic was found in water, and a box of sodium arsenite (used for sheep-dip, weighing

60 lb.) was discovered near such water. The German commander professed that "water-places have to be regarded as war material," and were therefore "rendered useless." He alleged that large notice-boards were placed to warn the British. This, according to General Botha, was untrue. On General Botha threatening reprisals the practice stopped.

*Maltreatment of Prisoners of War.*—Report of Major Vandaleur, captured October 13, 1914; "At Douai I was subjected to continual abuse and revilement. . . . No food was given, no straw. . . . On October 17 . . . we were all marched off to the railway station, being reviled at and cursed all the way by German officers as well as German soldiers. One of our officers was spat on by a German officer. . . . We were driven into closed-in wagons from which horses had just been removed, fifty-two men being crowded into the one in which the other four officers and myself were. So tight were we packed that there was only room for some of us to sit down on the floor. This floor was covered fully three inches deep in fresh manure, and the stench of horse urine was almost asphyxiating. . . . At Mons I was pulled out in front of the wagon by the order of the officer in charge of the station, and after cursing me in filthy language . . . he ordered one of his soldiers to kick me back into the wagon, which he did [Major Vandaleur was wounded]. . . . One of these wagons is considered to be able to accommodate six horses or forty men, and this only with the doors open to admit of ventilation." In this wagon they were seventy-two hours.—Cd. 7862, pp. 10-12; cf. Cd. 3108; pp. 14-19.

Private Tolley of the Royal Marines was taken prisoner at Antwerp in 1914, when he weighed fourteen stone. Through maltreatment and medical neglect he developed tuberculosis and arrived in Engand "extremely emaciated" as an exchanged prisoner early in 1916. He died a fortnight later in Millbank Hospital, weighing five stone.—Question in the House of Commons, April 15, 1916, when, however, it was officially stated that there was no record of his weight at death. The figure given is, if unofficial, accurate.

Evidence was given by Major Priestley and other British medical officers of the condition of the British prisoners in the typhus-infested camp at Wittenberg during 1915. The typhus infection is carried by lice which are found on all soldiers subject to campaigning conditions. When the epidemic broke out the German medical staff fled. There was no soap. The food ration for the sick was a small roll and half a cup of milk a day. The sick were lying, filthily dirty, and many of them on the floor, without beds or mattresses. "Major Priestley saw delirious men waving arms brown to the elbow with faecal matter. The patients were alive with vermin; in the half light he attempted to brush what he took to be an accumulation of dust from the folds of a patient's clothes and he discovered it to be a moving mass of lice." When the soldiers died their coffins were jeered at by the inhabitants of Wittenberg, "who stood outside the wire and were permitted to insult their [the British] dead." Dr. Aschenbach, a prominent German official, curtly refused a request for an urgent medical requisite with the words "Schweine Engländer."—Cd. 8224.

At this camp Mr. Osborne, of the United States Embassy in Berlin, reported complaints that one of the watchmen kept a large and fierce dog "which had attacked and torn the clothes of several of the prisoners," and stated that "all evidence of kindly and humane feeling between the authorities and the prisoners was lacking." Mr. Gerard, the United States Ambassador, paid a visit to this same camp in November, 1915, and reported that his impression was "distinctly unfavourable."

There was a considerable improvement in the condition and treatment of the British prisoners in late 1915 and 1916, due (*a*) to fear of reprisals, as the number of German prisoners in British hands was considerably in excess of the total of British prisoners in German hands at the end of 1915; (*b*) to the efforts of the United States Embassy to put down brutality.

## (2) *Crimes against Non-combatants on Land*

*Use of Non-combatants as Screens.*—Lieutenant Eberlein, in a letter published in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, October 7, 1914, in an account of the capture of Saint-Dié by the Bavarians, stated that he had to barricade himself in a house against the French troops. "We had seized three civilians, and a capital idea entered my head. We clapped them down on chairs and made them understand that they must sit on these chairs in the middle of the street. . . . I pitied them, but the plan was immediately efficacious; the enfilading fire from the houses on us diminished at once. . . . The —— reserve regiment which en-

tered Saint-Dié from the north had experiences very similar to our own. Four civilians whom they, like ourselves, forced to sit in the street, were killed by French bullets. I saw them myself stretched out dead in the middle of the street." The *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* recorded no protest against this story.—Passage reproduced in facsimile, Bédier, 20. -

Verdict of the Bryce Committee: "That the rules and usages of war were frequently broken [by the Germans], particularly by the using of civilians, including women and children, as a shield for advancing forces exposed to fire."—Report of Committee, p. 61.

"During the attack on the village of Autriche which Lieutenant Courtois (of the French army) had entered with his section, he saw that all the women and children of the place were put at the windows with the Germans behind them. . . . He and some dozen of his men were struck down by a volley."—Report of Major Hennægen, 354th (French Infantry) Regiment, of events on September 23, 1914. (Bland, p. 320.)

*Murder of Women and Children.*—P. Spielmann, Ersatz Battalion, 1st Guard Infantry Brigade, wrote in his diary of a massacre of people in a village near Blamont on September 1, 1914: "It was horrible; blood was spattered on all the houses; as for the faces of the dead they were hideous. Among them were many old women, old men, and one woman with child, all horrible to look at, and three children clinging to one another and killed in this position. This morning all the survivors were expelled. I saw a mother with two little children; one had a huge wound on its head and one eye put out."—Facsimile in Bédier, 8.

Unsigned diary: "Langeviller (August 22); village destroyed by the 11th Pioneers. Three women hanged to trees." Same diary, August 30: "We destroyed eight houses with their inhabitants. In one of them we bayoneted two men with their wives and a girl of eighteen. The girl all but melted me; her look was so full of innocence. But we could not repress the excitement of the troops; at such moments they are beasts, not men."—Bédier, in facsimile, 15-17.

*Wholesale Massacres of Civilians.*—Diary of Philipp, 178th Regiment of Infantry: "At the entrance to the village (near Dinant) lay about fifty dead civilians, shot for having fired upon our troops from ambulances. In the course of the night many others were shot, so that we counted over two hundred. Women and children, lamp in hand, were forced to look on at the horrible scene."—Bédier, facsimile, 12.

Diary of officer in this regiment, name unknown: "The men simply threw the males of the village into the flames."—Bédier, 11.

Diary of a soldier of the 32nd Reserve Infantry Regiment: "Creil, September 3. The iron bridge was blown up. Because of this the streets were set on fire and the civilians shot." [The bridge was blown up by the French troops, not by the inhabitants.]—Bédier, 9.

Diary of a lieutenant in the 49th Infantry Regiment: "At Visé it was more appalling . . . a fusillade broke out in all the houses. The Pioneers replied. (In reality they fired blindly at random and to some extent fired on one another.) Because of this the whole town was burnt. In addition 375 men were shot."—Fac-

simile in Dampierre, *L'Allemagne et le Droit des Gens*, p. 217.

"In these terrible days at Dinant and the neighbouring villages more than 800 people were killed, among whom were many women and children. . . . They began by shooting fifty-three civilians. . . . For three days women and children were shut up in little rooms, without even a chair, and the wretched creatures passed these three days on the stone floor almost without food; four of them gave birth to children in these terrible conditions. . . . The women and children were separated from the men and placed on the other side of the little square. Then firing-parties drew up between the two groups and 153 hapless men fell with the death-rattle."—Evidence of a Dutch subject, M. Staller, in the Dutch *Telegraaf*, translated in the *Temps*, December 19, 1914. This massacre was caused by the loss which the French troops had inflicted on the Germans.

Particulars of massacres at Louvain, Andenne, Liége, and Aerschot are contained in the Bryce Report and Appendix.

*Rape of Women*.—Diary of J. van der Schoot, 39th Reserve Infantry. "We copulated and caroused through the streets of Liége."—Document in Appendix to the Bryce Report.—Cd. 7895, p. 173.

See, too, this statement from the diary of a soldier of the 12th Infantry of Reserve, reproduced in facsimile in Bédier, p. 25: "Last night a man of the Landwehr, more than thirty-five years of age, married, tried to violate the quite young daughter of the man in whose house he was quartered; when the father came upon the scene, he held his bayonet to his breast."

Report of the French police at La Ferté-Gaucher: "The Germans . . . returned in the evening intoxicated; they then violated the young woman Y. and Mme. X." This report is accompanied by the statement of the two women.—Bland, 93-7. In this same neighbourhood two wounded British cavalrymen were murdered by the Germans.—French Official Report, December 17, 1914.

Much evidence is contained in the official French and Belgian Reports which shows that these outrages were not isolated events, but occurred in almost every district and in large number. For example, at Bailleul, occupied by a German cavalry regiment for only eight days, there were thirty cases of outrages on women sworn to and authenticated generally by medical certificates, and the actual number of outrages is estimated at sixty.—J. H. Morgan, *German Atrocities*, p. 57.

*Torture of Women.*—A British officer heard shrieks in the night behind the German trenches at Richebourg l'Avoué; when the British troops stormed the position next day a girl "was found naked on the ground 'pegged out' in the form of a crucifix."—Morgan, p. 63.

*Forced Labour and Deportation of Women and Men.*—In a note issued July 25, 1916, the French Government challenged Germany to permit neutral Powers to inquire into the seizure of non-combatants at Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing, in April, 1916. The facts were that 22,000 girls over twenty, women and men in these French towns, then in enemy occupation, were seized by German soldiers from regiments defeated at Verdun, and carried off in droves, all together, pell-

mell. The men were to be employed in forced labour on the land, on roads, and in the manufacture of munitions. The women were to cook and wash for the soldiers and to replace the officers' orderlies. Evidence was produced showing that young women had been forced to work for the enemy under fire, had been brutally ill-used, had been miserably fed, and in some cases had been flogged.

The German Government refused to allow any neutral State to inquire into the facts.—See *Les Allemands à Lille*, French official publication.

*Pillage*.—A German post card (photographed in Dampierre, p. 175) shows German soldiers actually engaged in the process of systematically stripping a house at Villers-la-Montagne. A German document signed by a high officer of the German 2nd Infantry Division (photographed in Dampierre, p. 174) orders "this cantonment not to be pillaged."

A diary of a private of the 65th Landwehr says of certain German troops: "They do not behave as soldiers, but as highwaymen, bandits, and brigands."—Facsimile in Bédier, p. 24, with many similar passages from other diaries.

A series of documents discovered on Germans (photographed in Dampierre, pp. 177-180) shows that prisoners were plundered of their money and the money divided between the officers and men. The names of Captain Krüpper and Lieutenants Winterhoff and Caspari occur as sharing the responsibility for this breach of the laws of war.

Dr. Gustav Stresemann, a member of the Reichstag (in *Das Deutsche Wirtschaftsleben im Kriege*, p. 50),

stated in 1915, in answer to a complaint of the Paris Chamber of Commerce that Belgium had been methodically pillaged of raw materials and manufactured goods: "This pillage has also been effected in France so far as concerns the textile and engineering industries . . . so that now the losses inflicted on France must reach several hundred millions sterling."

General von Bissing not only admitted but defended the pillage of Belgium. "Without coal what would have become of our policy of industrial exchange, not only with Holland, but also with far distant northern countries? The annual Belgian production of 23,000,000 tons of coal has given us a monopoly on the Continent which has helped to maintain our vitality."

—(General von Bissing's Testament.)

*Arson.*—Photographs of villages wantonly burnt by the Germans appear on their own picture post cards, some of which have been reproduced.—(Dampierre, p. 172, gives such a post card of Etain, which the enemy has christened Eton.)

Numerous German diaries record the burning of villages, usually on the excuse that the German troops were fired on, though in almost every such case where there was firing it can be shown to have proceeded from uniformed and organised French troops. For example, the diary of a warrant officer of the 117th Infantry says: "Approaching the Meuse we draw a violent fire from infantry and machine-guns on the fringe of the wood on the farther bank. The enemy retired. The village (of Villers-sur-Meuse) was burnt."

The pretext that the French and Belgian population was armed was advanced in some quarters as an excuse

for these outrages. The statement was not generally true, though, even if it were, The Hague Convention permits the spontaneous defence of its native country by an invaded population. But in East Prussia where the whole German civilian population was armed and repeatedly attacked the Russian troops, when some small portion of Memel was burnt, the German Government in a note denounced this as a breach of the laws of war—thereby condemning its own conduct in Belgium—and stated that ten Russian villages would be burnt for each German one.

The Official Report of the French Commission appointed to investigate acts committed by the enemy in violation of International Law sums up the behaviour of the German troops in the evacuated territory in these words: “After they had been pillaged, houses, châteaux, and farms were destroyed by means of explosives, or were set on fire or demolished with pick-axes. . . . Chauny, a manufacturing town of nearly 11,000 inhabitants, is nothing but a heap of ruins, save for the suburb of Le Bronage. . . . One has only to look at all these ruins to recognise that they were not heaped one upon another merely for military reasons, and that the desire to injure was the essential motive.”

*Destruction of Historic Buildings and Objects of Art.*—At Louvain, by the admission of Miss Emily Hobhouse, one-eighth of the city was destroyed. The number of houses burnt was 894 in Louvain itself and 500 in the suburbs, and among the buildings destroyed was the University library with its archives and collection of unpublished manuscripts. M. Grondijs, a Dutch professor, a dispassionate neutral eye-witness, has given

an account of this crime and of the temper in which it was committed. He quotes a German officer who told his men: "As yet we have burnt only villages . . . now we are beginning to burn towns. Louvain will be the first." He records a dialogue with a German soldier whom he asked how the Germans knew who had fired on them, to which the man replied, "Do you imagine we trouble to search thoroughly on a dark night?" He describes the deliberate burning of a church, and, if the Germans tried to prevent the fire—which, as he said, they had lighted themselves—from spreading in the direction of the town hall, he points out that the German Headquarters were in that building.—Facts concerning Louvain will be found in R. Narsy, *Le Supplice de Louvain*, which also contains and analyses the German "explanations."

Rheims Cathedral was repeatedly and deliberately shelled by the Germans, on the false excuse that there was an observation post on the tower. The Germans stated that the bombardment began on September 20, 1914, when a white flag was dishonourably shown on the cathedral; the actual date when the bombardment began was, however, September 19, the day before the pretended offence. General von Disfurt, a German officer of distinction, wrote of this in the *Tag*: "The meanest grave of one of our soldiers is more venerable than all the cathedrals, all the art treasures of the world."

The facts regarding Rheims will be found in *La Basilique Dévastée*, by "Vindex." The state of the cathedral is the proof of the charges against the Germans.

The beautiful Cathedral of St. Quentin has been

practically destroyed, the Germans announcing the fact to the world by accusing the French of being the cause of it.

At Senlis and Ypres similar wanton damage was done, and there again the ruins bear their testimony against the German command.

*Sacrilege*.—Diary of a soldier of the 12th Infantry, III. Reserve Corps: “A man entered the sacristy where was the Holy Sacrament (out of respect a Protestant had refused to sleep there) : he left there a great mass of excrement.”—Photographic facsimile in Bédier, 25. References to photographs and documents in *L'Allemagne et les Alliés devant la Conscience Chrétienne*, pp. 374-377.

His Holiness the Pope, in the interview with M. Laudet, said: “You ask me if I condemn, in principle, the atrocities committed. In principle—that is not enough. I condemn them concretely. *All the world knows that Germany has committed them.*”—*L'Allemagne et les Alliés devant la Conscience Chrétienne*, p. 170.

*Murder of Priests*.—Cardinal Mercier, the saintly Archbishop of Malines, in a letter to the German Governor, stated: “The names of the priests and of members of the religious orders in the diocese of Malines who, to my knowledge, have been put to death by the German troops are: Dupierreux, of the Society of Jesus; Sebastian Allard, of the Congregation of Josephites; Brother Candide, of the Congregation of Brothers of Our Lady of Pity; Father Vincent; Professor Carette; Lombaert, Goris, de Clerck, Dergent, Wouters, Van Bladel, parish priests. . . . The body

of the priest at Herent has been recovered at Louvain and identified. Other figures which I gave in my pastoral letter must to-day (January 24, 1915) be increased; thus at Aerschot I gave 91 victims as the figure; the total of bodies exhumed is 143." He called for a commission of inquiry composed in equal parts of Belgians and Germans, and presided over by a neutral representative. No notice was taken of this demand. An inquiry was made, however, by a priest dispatched by Cardinal Piffl, Archbishop of Vienna, the results of which were damning, and were never published in the German Press.—*Lettre de l'Episcopate Belge aux Cardinaux*, Texte Officiel, No. 72 of *Pages Actuelles*, pp. 32-3 and 36.

### III.—CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE GERMAN AIR FORCES

*Bombing of Non-combatants and Open Towns.*—In the Zeppelin raids on Great Britain bombs were consistently dropped on small towns and residential districts of large towns. Military works were avoided; in general the German airships were nowhere near munition works. Full statements by neutrals have been published on this head. Down to September 4, 1916, 352 persons had been killed and 799 injured—almost all non-combatants and many of them women and children—in German air raids. The writer is able to say, after personally examining the bomb-discharging apparatus in L 33, that it was of such a nature as to make hitting any target out of the question at a height of 5,000 feet or more, at which these airships attack.

There were two large aeroplane raids upon London, both of which caused considerable loss of life. The first of these took place on June 13, 1917, and caused the death of 157 men, women, and children, and 432 were injured. Of the casualties, 142 were small children, some being killed at school. The second attack on London was on July 7. The raid was made by twenty large Gotha machines and 59 persons were killed and 193 injured.

"The attack of bombardment by any means whatever of undefended towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings" is forbidden by Article 25 of The Hague Convention of 1907.

*Attacks by German Aircraft on Neutral Vessels without Warning or Regard for the Safety of Those on Board.*—On April 26, 1916, the United States oil steamer *Cushing*, of 7,000 tons, flying the United States flag, with her name painted on her side in letters 6 feet high, was attacked north of the Maas Lightship by a German aeroplane, which dropped three bombs aimed at her. One struck the stern rail and exploded, nearly killing several of her crew.

The United States protested, and directed its Ambassador in Berlin to demand explanations.

Similar attacks were made by German seaplanes No. 79 and 85 on the Dutch vessels *Hibernia* (March, 1915), and 's *Gravenhage* (May, 1915); by two German aeroplanes on the Greek steamer *Miron* in the Ægean; and by Zeppelins on the Danish steamer *Alexy* and the Norwegian steamer *Uranus* (April, 1915). Since that date they have been reported from time to time.

#### IV.—CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE GERMAN SEA FORCES

*Submarine Murders.*—“Great ships like the *Lusitania* and the *Arabic*, and pure passenger ships, like the *Sussex*, have been attacked without any warning, often before they were aware they were in the presence of an armed enemy ship, and the life of non-combatants, passengers, and crews was indiscriminately destroyed in a manner which the Government of the United States could only regard as wanton and lacking every justification. Indeed, no limit was set to the . . . destruction of merchantmen of every kind and nationality outside the waters which the Imperial (German) Government had been pleased to indicate as within the war zone. The list of Americans who lost their lives in the vessels thus attacked . . . has risen to hundreds.”—United States Note of April, 1916, to Germany.

The greatest of these crimes, thus branded by a neutral Government, was the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915, when 1,400 men, women, and children were drowned.

In the British Museum is a medal struck in Germany to celebrate the event. On the obverse is a crowd of Americans taking tickets which are given them by a skeleton, with the motto *Geschäft über Alles*: “Business above everything.” On the reverse is the *Lusitania* sinking, with an inscription to the effect that she was torpedoed by a German submarine on May 5, 1915 (the real date was May 7), and above the ship is the motto: “No contraband.” She has a ram in her stem

and on her deck is an aeroplane. The medal is by Goetz.—*The Times*, July 14, 1916.

The German Government at the end of January, 1917, announced that on February 1 she would begin an unrestricted campaign in which she would use "all means" to prevent any sea traffic with Great Britain, France, Italy, and the allied Mediterranean bases. By this action the Germans threw overboard all pretence to act in accordance with International Law or even with the elementary dictates of humanity.

*Use of Mines.*—Mines were scattered by the Germans in enormous quantities outside territorial waters, on the high seas, in the track of neutral shipping, without warning. Thus, in the opening days of the war, large mine-fields were laid in the North Sea outside British waters, off Lowestoft, Hull, and Newcastle. Off Lowestoft the mine-field ran out to a distance of fifty miles or more from the coast. Large numbers of neutral vessels struck German mines and were sunk or badly damaged by them—to give examples, *Carib*, U.S. steamer, sunk on February 23, 1915, in the North Sea; *Amstel*, Dutch steamer, mined and sunk on March 28; *Folke*, Swedish, mined and sunk on April 14; *Lilian Drost*, Danish, mined and sunk on May 15. Mines were scattered to the north-west of Ireland in the autumn of 1914 on the route of neutral as well as British shipping to the United States.

This question of laying mines outside territorial waters was raised at the Second Hague Conference by the British Government, when the German representative, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, said in answer to a British proposal to forbid mines as inhuman and

dangerous to neutrals: "The officers of the German Navy, I say it loudly, will always fulfil in the strictest fashion the duties which the unwritten law of humanity and of civilisation lay on them."—Cd. 4,081. Protocols of the Second Peace Conference, p. 55.

*Wanton Bombardment of Open Towns.*—On December 16, 1914, the German battle cruisers under Admiral Hipper shelled Whitby, Scarborough, and the Hartlepools, killing 150 non-combatants, many of whom were women and children, and wounding over 400. No notice was given; no naval operations were undertaken; the fire was directed at houses and residential districts. On April 25, 1916, a similar purposeless attack was made on Lowestoft and Yarmouth, but on this occasion only very trifling loss was inflicted.

This conduct was forbidden by The Hague Conventions.

*Torpedoing of Hospital Ships.*—On February 2, 1915, a torpedo was fired by a German submarine at the British hospital ship *Asturias*, while it was still daylight. The torpedo missed owing to the skilful seamanship of the captain. The fact was not denied by the German Admiralty, but it pretended that the torpedo was fired in the dark. On November 21, 1916, a German submarine torpedoed or sank by a mine the hospital ship *Britannic*; on November 24, 1916, the hospital ship *Braemar Castle*.

At the beginning of 1917 Germany declared that she would sink all hospital ships passing between Britain and France; but the effect upon neutrals of this barbarous action was so great that after a few months the policy was abandoned and hospital ships were al-

lowed free passage provided they carried Spanish officers who would vouch for the vessels being restricted to the purposes for which they were designed.

*Murder of Captain Fryatt.*—On June 23, 1916, the British passenger steamer *Brussels*, Captain Charles Fryatt, was captured by German torpedo craft off Zeebrugge. He was separated from the other British subjects on board the ship, tried by court-martial on July 27, and sentenced to death on the charge that he had been guilty of acting as “a franc-tireur.” He was shot after the German Emperor and the German Headquarters Staff and Admiralty at a council had determined to put him to death.

The offence imputed to him was that on March 28, 1915, he had tried to ram a submarine which was attempting to sink him. That he had done so is not denied: he was acting under the instructions of the British Admiralty, which acted on the immemorial and undisputed law of the sea, an element on which the Germans were newcomers.

In Article 2 of the Appendix to the German Naval Prize Regulations, issued in Berlin on June 22, 1914, for the purpose of this war, it was laid down that “if an armed enemy merchant vessel offers armed resistance . . . the crew are to be treated as prisoners of war” (and not to be shot).

No “franc-tireur” crime, whatever that is, exists at sea. Chief-Judge Marshall, of the United States, laid down the law that a belligerent vessel has a perfect right to arm in her own defence. The British Lord Stowell said that if the master of a merchant ship does his best to save his ship by gun-fire or otherwise,

"no duty is violated by such act on his part. . . . He may run from the sea-wolf, or he may, if he can, kill it." The principle was accepted by the German jurists Wehberg and Perels on the very eve of war.

The modern U.S. Naval War Code, Italian Code, and Russian Prize Regulations recognise the right of a merchant ship to defend herself.—Pearce Higgins, *Armed Merchant Ships*, which contains a masterly summary of the law on the subject, and demolishes the German Admiralty's pretexts.

#### V.—GERMAN OUTRAGES IN THE UNITED STATES

*Levying of War in Neutral Countries on the Allies and on Subjects of those Neutral Countries, engaged in Legitimate Trade with the Allies.*—The German and Austrian Embassies in the United States and their agents (1) paid for attacks on Canadian territory; thus the cheque paid for the destruction of an important bridge on the Canadian Pacific Railway by a German agent named Horn on February 2, 1915, was found in the German papers seized by the British Government in the luggage of Captain von Papen, the German Military Attaché at Washington.—Cd. 8,174, p. 17; cf. also Cd. 8,232. (2) Arranged strikes in American factories making munitions for the Allied Governments. "We must send so-called 'soap-box' orators who will know, and so start a useful agitation. We shall want money for popular meetings. . . . We must stir up men's feelings." A document containing this passage, prepared by the editor of the German-subventioned *Szabadsag*, was enclosed by Dr. Dumba,

Austrian Ambassador at Washington, to the Austrian Government, and was captured by the British authorities in the papers carried by J. F. J. Archibald.—Cd. 8,012, p. 11. (3) Planned explosions or fires in munition factories which caused heavy loss of life among American subjects, as at Wilmington, September 1, 1915; in the Bethlehem, Baldwin, and Roebling Works, in November, 1915; in the Dupont Works, December 1, when thirty-one men were killed; while Hopewell, where lived the men employed in one of the Dupont Powder Works, was set on fire and destroyed on December 9. Many documents bearing on these and other crimes fell into the hands of the United States authorities.

In 1917 it was discovered that Germany, through her diplomatic agents at New York, had actually been sounding Mexico as to taking action against the United States in the event of war between Germany and America. Japan was also to be involved with the United States. Zimmerman, the Foreign Secretary, even then defended the policy when it became known.

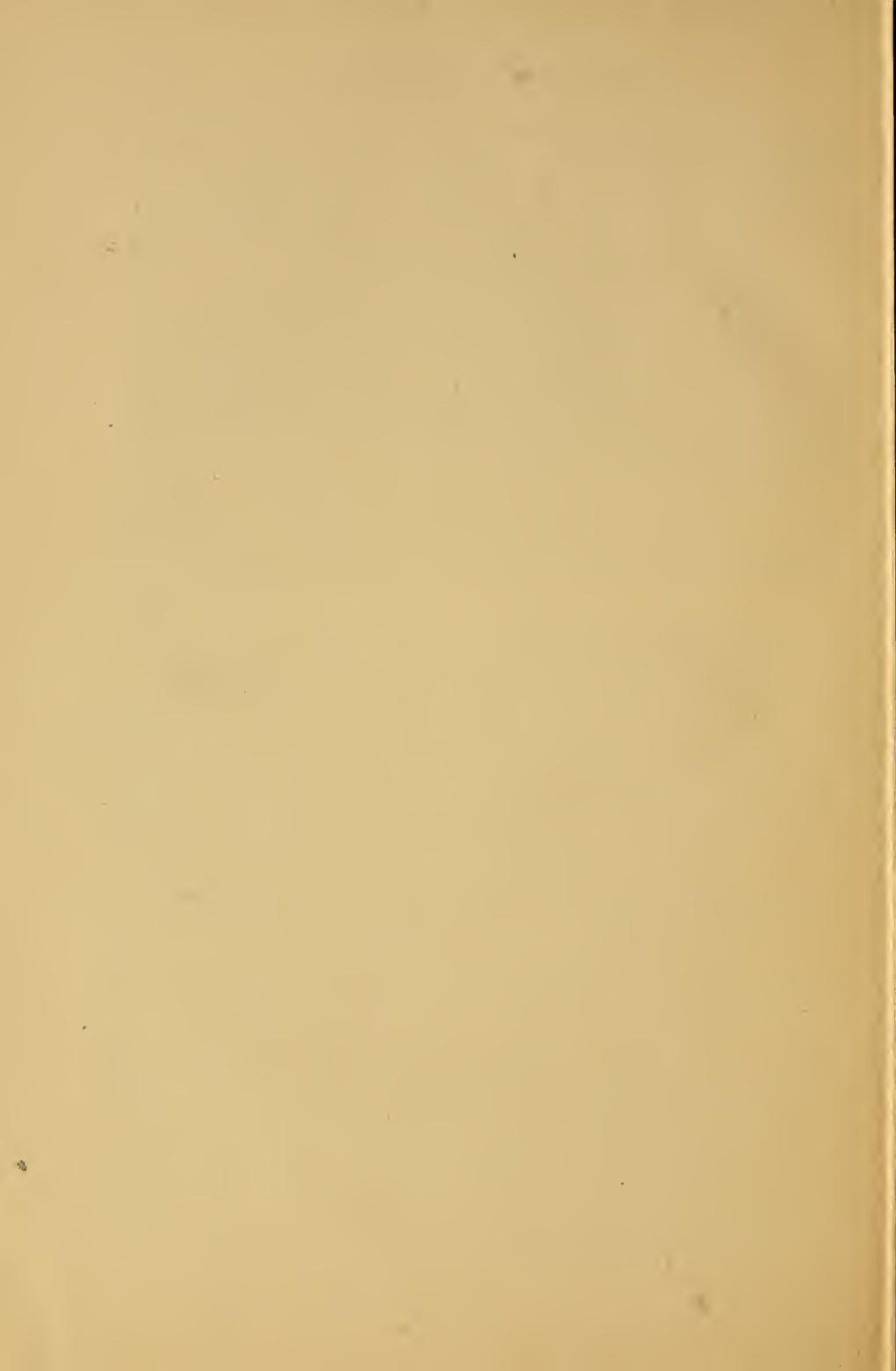
To complete this summary, which only gives typical crimes and does not exhaust the vast catalogue of German outrages and atrocities, committed as these have been on every front and in every field, certain passages from the famous German *War Book* may be quoted to show the German frame of mind. They are taken from the admirable translation by Professor Morgan:

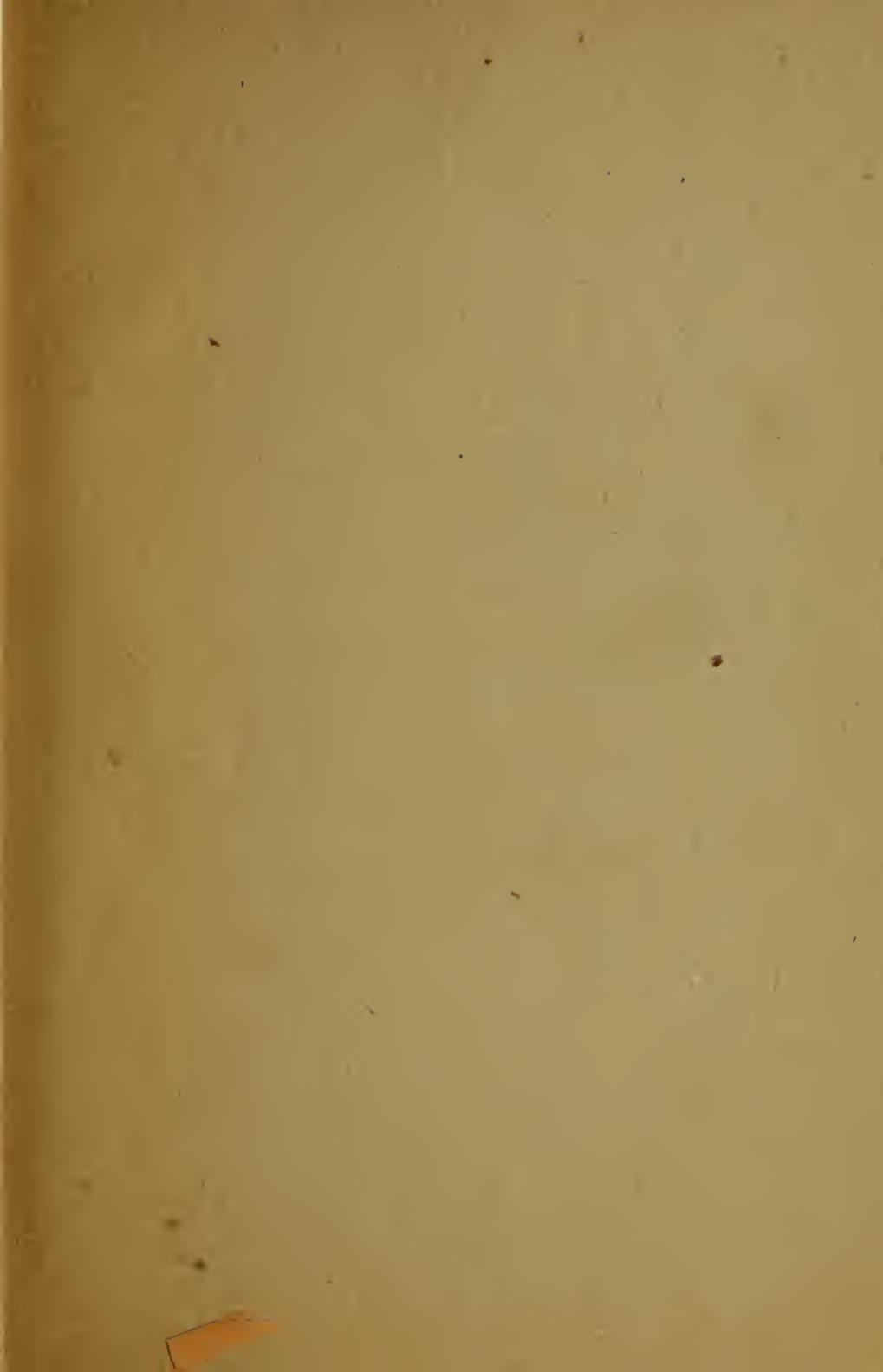
"International law is in no way opposed to the exploitation of the crimes of third parties (assassination, incendiaryism, robbery, and the like) to the prejudice of the enemy. . . . The ugly and immoral aspect of

such methods cannot affect the recognition of their lawfulness."—p. 86.

"Certain severities are indispensable to war—nay, more, . . . the only true humanity very often lies in a ruthless application of them."—p. 55.

"By the law of war is meant not a *lex scripta*, . . . but only a reciprocity of mutual agreement; a limitation of arbitrary behaviour . . . for the observance of which there exists no express sanction, but only the fear of reprisals."—p. 54.





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